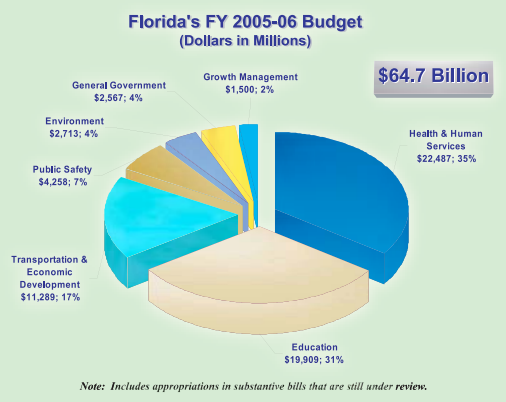


UPDATE: FLORIDA'S RECORD \$64.7 BILLION BUDGET

IN THIS ISSUE:

**Important information about new Florida laws that may affect YOU!**

- Bills Sponsored By Senator Bullard:**
- S 0560: Congenital Craniofacial Anomalies
  - S 0616: Tax Exemption/Machinery & Equipment
  - S 1528: Keys Aqueduct Authority/Monroe Co.
  - S 1582: Corp. Income Tax/Cultural Inst. TF
  - S 1698: Driver License Restrictions/Age
  - S 1700: R. H. Christophe & C. Summer Blvds.
  - S 1718: Crisis Intervention Team Program
  - S 1740: Fathers
  - S 1742: Mothers
  - S 2274: Students First Act
  - S 2400: Dori Slosberg Road Safety Act
  - S 2402: Abuse of Children
  - S 2404: Anti-gang Education/Miami-Dade Co.
  - S 2432: Cardrooms/Games of Dominoes
  - S 2464: School-based Health Care Task Force
  - S 2466: Interstate Highway Safety
  - S 2682: Key Largo Fire/Rescue Services Dist.
  - S 2686: Dotson, Drs. Albert E. & Earlene



The Legislature created a \$64.7 billion budget for Florida's Fiscal Year 2005-2006. Total education funding was \$19.9 billion. Almost \$22.5 billion will be provided for health and welfare services under this budget. And, important priorities like affordable housing, new prison construction and transportation improvements were funded.

This year, we provided education funding for the first year of universal pre-kindergarten, to reduce class size, continue Bright Futures and keep college tuition low. I

tried, with some of my colleagues, to increase funding for teachers' salaries, but our efforts to help our public school teachers were opposed in the Legislature.

The Legislature provided critical funding for Florida's most needy in the Medically Needy program, to restore Medicaid coverage for pregnant women, and to expand KidCare enrollment year-round. Similarly, some of my colleagues and I tried to increase the number of hours nursing home staff spent with residents, but our proposal to increase staffing hours was opposed as well.

**TAXES**  
**Intangible Tax:** Lawmakers approved another roll back in the state's intangibles tax, a levy on stock and bond holdings in excess of \$250,000.

**Property Tax:** Lawmakers approved a plan that boosts school funding this year by \$1.3 billion. But an unprecedented \$818 million will come from property taxes across Florida. Most Florida homeowners will end up paying an additional 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.



LARCENIA BULLARD  
2005

A Legislative Newsletter from your State Senator.



DEAR FRIENDS:



ties fairly, by concentrating on the most global issues affecting each county such as infrastructure, comprehensive planning and water quality. Transportation and water quality are common to all of the areas I represent and I have worked with fellow lawmakers to preserve our water quality and build better roadways throughout the state. We continue to take testimony from various groups who bring suggestions before the committees to assist with improving these very important components in our counties.


As your State Senator I have the obligation of ensuring the best interests of my constituents are paramount in regards to Hendry, Collier, Monroe, Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. It is an honor to serve as your State Senator I urge you to contact my office if there is a state related issue that I may assist you with.

Sincerely  
*Larcenia Bullard*  
State Senator  
District 39

The 2005 Legislative Session served to be one of mixed emotions and balancing a budget of \$64.7 billion was our priority. The Terri Schiavo issue was very emotional and required some tough decision making. As your senator I had to make a decision that best served the total constituency based on future funding projections. Frankly, the issue addressing Terri Schiavo is the kind of issue that should not come before the legislature.

As one who has served on the education committee my entire political career I again served on the education committee, substantively and fiscally. My fellow lawmakers and I worked to support the best initiatives to serve the sixty seven (67) counties we represent. I serve six of the sixty seven counties, all of Monroe and Hendry, a huge portion of Miami-Dade, portions of Broward, Palm Beach and Collier Counties. I continue to do my very best to adequately serve these coun-


IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS					
State Telephone Directory	(850) 488-1234	Elder Helpline	(800) 963-5337	License Verification-Business & Professional	(850) 487-1395
Adoption	(800) 962-3678	Food Stamp Fraud	(800) 342-9274	License Verification-Health Care Professions	(850) 488-0595
Banking, Finance, Securities-Complaint	(800) 848-3192	Governor's Office	(850) 488-4441	Licensing Requirements Business & Professional	(850) 487-1395
Charitable Contributions/Organizations	(800) 435-7352	Health Care Facilities & Agencies-Complaints	(888) 419-3456	Licensing Requirements Health Care Professions	(850) 488-0595
Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 962-2873	Health Care Licensing	(850) 488-0595	Medicaid Fraud and Abuse	(888) 419-3456
Consumer Services	(800) 435-7352	HMO-Complaints	(888) 419-3456	Medical Practitioners-Complaints	(888) 419-3456
Corporations	(850) 488-9000	House of Representatives	(850) 488-1157	Senate	(850) 487-5229
Discrimination Complaints	(800) 342-8170	Insurance Consumer Helpline	(800) 342-2762	State Library	(850) 245-6600
Domestic Violence	(800) 500-1119	Labor Law Information	(800)342-3450	State Telephone Directory	(850) 488-1234
				Tax Forms	(850) 922-9645
				Tax Information	(850) 922-4827
				Taxpayer Services	(850) 488-6800
				Telephone Solicitation-No Solicitation List	(850) 410-3680
				Tourism Information	(888) 735-2872
				Utilities-complaints	(800) 342-3552
				Vital Statistics	(904) 359-6900
				Whistleblower (State Employees)	(800) 543-5353



District 39 State Senator

**Larcenia BULLARD**

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Senator Larcenia Bullard and Representative Ed Bullard on the opening day of the 2005 Legislative Session.

# FLORIDA LEGISLATURE 2005



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Under a new state mandate, sufficient roads and schools would be required to be in place within three years of a development's approval. The bill also requires that a development to have sufficient water supplies in place within one year of occupancy. It encourages local governments to create a "community vision" about its growth plans and an "urban service boundary" to encourage compact contiguous urban development. This bill includes \$1.5 billion for FY 2005-06 to pay for roads, schools and water supplies, and an additional \$750 million per year, for 10 years after. There are no new taxes levied at the local level for the infrastructure. Other environmental legislation passed this year include a bill that mandates that schools and property owners would

receive information regarding environmental contamination has spread onto their property. The bill requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to notify property owners within 30 days of receiving the information. If a school is located on a contaminated site, DEP is required to notify the chairman of the governing School Board, who would then notify teachers and parents. We also provided a permanent funding source for new statewide water projects and existing water-improvement programs that have languished because of lack of funds. Among them are programs to reduce water pollution, provide more regional water resources and help build more local sewage and drinking water systems.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Existing Florida law already allows residents defend themselves against attackers if they could prove there was no escape. This session, some lawmakers thought it necessary to allow would-be victims to use deadly force even if they could have fled. I did not support this measure because I am very concerned that the measure could easily lead to fights between neighbors, parents at soccer games or drinking buddies escalating into gunfights.

We also unanimously passed legislation toughening the tracking and sentencing of sexual offenders. The Jessica Lunsford Act, named for the 9-year old Citrus County girl who was kidnapped and murdered, establishes a mandatory sentence of 25 years to life behind bars for people convicted of certain sex crimes against children 11 and younger, with lifetime tracking by global positioning satellite after they are freed.

## Reducing Class Size and Increasing Funding Levels SPECIAL REPORT ON EDUCATION

With public schools getting more than 31% (\$15.8 billion) of the state budget, education was an essential focal point of the 2005 legislative session. I will continue to view education as my primary initiative as I serve District 39.

The budget earmarks \$1.5 billion for class size reduction, \$263 million in bonuses for schools that earn a grade of A or improve their grade a level, and earmarks an additional \$89 million for reading programs. About \$387 million will go to the new statewide pre-kindergarten program. The budget also has a 5 percent tuition increase for undergraduate in-state students at community colleges and public universities. It also increases the grant size given to Florida students who attend private colleges or universities to \$2,850, up from \$2,369 this year and affecting some 33,000 students. The price tag for Bright Futures scholarships, which are paid for with lottery dollars, climbs about \$36 million to nearly \$312 million to keep pace with enrollment and tuition. Need-based financial aid climbed about \$8.3 million to \$102 million.

We also fought and won to keep provisions in a bill which require fingerprinting and background checks of teachers and administrators in private schools who have students on public school vouchers.

The only conferee from Miami-Dade County appointed to the Senate Education Appropriations Committee, I filed legislation to change the "A Plus Plus" plan to make the program more child, teacher and parent friendly. Also, I argued for the \$547,000 that passed in the Appropriations Act to fund the "Science Comes to Life" program at the Metro Zoo.

I believe that progress in education is far from what it needs to be. Children, teachers and parents still aren't receiving the kind of attention they need from state officials, with salary levels trailing far behind other states.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

**HEALTH CARE AND ITS EFFECTIVE DELIVERY ARE PARAMOUNT CONCERNS FOR MOST FLORIDIANS. WHEN IT COMES TO HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH CARE, ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY OFTEN RANK AS THE HIGHEST CONCERNS FOR FLORIDIANS.**



### Mandatory Insurance Coverage for Congenital Craniofacial Anomalies

I introduced this bill requiring that the Agency for Health Care Administration, in consultation with the Insurance Regulation Office, conduct a study concerning medical necessity, costs, & efficacy of mandating coverage for certain treatments & therapies related to deformational plagiocephaly or misshapen heads.

I strongly believe that certain treatments are medically necessary, low in cost, efficacious, and that the state should mandate coverage by insurance providers for this debilitating condition.

This year, lawmakers approved legislation carrying out a constitutional amendment requiring parental notice when a minor seeks an abortion. The legislation requires parents of those minors under 18 seeking an abortion, to be notified by the minor's physician between 48 to 72 hours before the procedure. The bill provides a judicial bypass for those cases where the minor's pregnancy was the result of sexual abuse by the parent or guardian. Legislation was also approved providing that if a fetus died as a result of the murder of the mother, the charge of murder for the death of the fetus would be the same as that for the mother. Abortions were excluded from this provision.

In response to calls for Medicaid

Reform, legislation was developed from recommendations of the Senate Select Committee on Medicaid Reform which held a series of town meetings throughout the state to hear input from Medicaid recipients. The bill contains both short and long-term initiatives to address over-utilization, cost inefficiencies, and fraud and abuse. Pending approval by the legislature, it also sets up managed care pilot projects for Medicaid including some long-term care services for elderly recipients.

However, I am concerned that the legislature might be taking a "meat cleaver" approach to cost cutting, whereby many Floridians might lose their safety net which has been in place for decades.

### Register for the Florida Kidcare Program!

For an enrollment application call:

**1-888-540-5437**

Previous enrollees call:

**1-800-821-5437**

Another amendment which successfully passed the Senate requires OPPAGA to collect information from drug companies about their drug pricing practices in order to ascertain whether fair and accurate prices are being charged.